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ABSTRACT

Since the School-to-Work Opportunities Act was passed in 1994, there has been debate over whether sufficient numbers of employers can be recruited, in order to create a national school-to-work system with the substantial work-based learning component the legislation calls for. Recent research on the question has had mixed results. In order to obtain more information, a 3-year research project focused on the question. Field work was conducted at 12 school-to-work programs. The study found that many employers are being recruited successfully; in fact, the recruitment and retention of employer partners was not the primary barrier in the implementation of the programs studied. Rather, student recruitment and parent, teacher, and counselor buy-in were all found to be significant obstacles interrelated with the problem of employer participation. There appear to be trade-offs between employer participation, student demand, and program quality. In addition, employer motivations for participation are rarely pure but are mixed and can change over time. The study concluded that employer participation cannot be studied separately from other program features and concerns. (Contains 22 references) (Author/KC)

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Institute on Education and the Economy

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IEE Working Paper No. 5

June 1998

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Abstract

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act was passed by Congress with bi-partisan support, as a result of concern over the preparedness of American youth for the changing world of work. There has been debate over whether sufficient numbers of employers can be recruited, in order to create a national school-to-work system with the substantial work-based learning component the legislation calls for. Recent research on the question has had mixed results. This paper reports on findings from a three-year research project focused on this question. Fieldwork was conducted at twelve school-to-work programs. The findings are that many employers are being successfully recruited; in fact, the recruitment and retention of employer partners was not the primary barrier in the implementation of the programs studied. Rather, student recruitment, and parent, teacher, and counselor buy-in, were all found to be significant obstacles interrelated with the problem of employer participation. There appear to be trade-offs between employer participation, student demand, and program quality. In addition, employer motivations for participation are rarely pure but are mixed and can change over time. The conclusion is that employer participation cannot be studied separately from other program features and concerns.

INTRODUCTION

The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) was passed by Congress with bi-partisan support, as a result of concern over the preparedness of American youth for the changing world of work, which has been characterized as an "emerging learning-based economy" (Urquiola et al., 1997, p.120). Research demonstrates that many young adults spend their early years in the workforce moving from one low-wage, dead-end job to another (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, 1990; William T. Grant Foundation on Work, Family, & Citizenship, 1988; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Jobs that were once available to high school graduates are requiring higher levels of skills (Murnane and Levy, 1996), contributing to the chronically high levels of youth unemployment. Thus the goal of the legislation is "to facilitate the creation of a universal, high-quality school-to-work transition system that enables youths in the United States to identify and navigate paths to productive and progressively more rewarding roles in the workplace" through educator and employer partnerships (Congress, Title VIII, Section 3).

The legislation calls for the following three components to be available to "all students" (Title I, section 101):

- school-based learning, which shall include career awareness and career exploration and counseling; selection of a career major by interested students; state-established academic content standards; integration of academic and vocational learning; ongoing

consultation with youth to identify strengths, weaknesses, and progress; and postsecondary connections (section 103);

- work-based learning, which shall include paid work experience, a planned program of job training and work experiences that are coordinated with learning in the school, workplace mentoring, instruction in general workplace competencies, and broad instruction in all aspects of the industry (section 102);
- appropriate "connecting activities," some of which include matching students with employers' work-based learning opportunities; the establishment of liaisons between employers, schools, parents, and students; technical assistance, services, and training for teachers, workplace and school site mentors; and means for the integration of school-based and work-based learning (section 104).

Hence the objective is to reform secondary education in a broad-based way, integrating workplace experiences and career information with "authentic" teaching and learning in the classroom[1] so a better connection can be made between academics and workforce preparation. The integration of school-based with work-based learning is seen as essential in order to fully realize the educational benefits of the latter. The establishment of programs with the above three components is to be achieved through educator-employer cooperation, so that what students learn in the classroom will be relevant to the workplaces of today and tomorrow.

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[1] This approach is one in which the student is more actively engaged in the "construction" of their own knowledge. See Bailey & Merritt (1997) for a discussion of "authentic" learning, also called the "learner-centered" approach to teaching.

While there appears to be widespread endorsement of the school-to-work model (Bailey and Merritt, 1997), there has been some debate in the burgeoning literature about whether enough employers can be recruited so that all students can have access to work-based learning through internships or apprenticeships, much less the planned program of work experience related with the school that the legislation calls for. Paul Osterman (1995) estimates that even if only 25 percent of high school juniors and seniors eventually participate in school-to-work programs, 1.5 million work placements will be needed each year. Osterman contends that high-quality training programs that teach skills ask too much of employers and are thus unlikely to be replicated; hence "the prospects for widespread employer participation seem bleak" (ibid., p.79).

With new programs being created as a result of federal and state support of school-to-work, the amount of research on the question of employer involvement has increased, with the results being mixed. Mathematica Policy Research's study of the School-to-Work Transition/Youth Apprenticeship Demonstration sites (Corson & Silverberg, 1994; Hershey & Silverberg, 1993), finds that the implementation of youth apprenticeship programs poses "a substantial burden on employers" and raises doubts about the potential for widespread youth apprenticeship (Hershey & Silverberg, 1993, p.9). Others are also pessimistic about the ability to recruit employers (Stern, 1995; and Office of Technology Assessment, 1995).

Yet other research finds that employer recruitment and retention may not be an insurmountable obstacle. Jobs for the Future's National Youth Apprenticeship Initiative, a study of ten programs around the country from 1991 to 1994, found that while most of the programs began with a focus in one industry, almost all increased the number of

participating industries and occupational areas over time. The report "Promising Practices" states that "the programs have significant and sustained employer involvement, and the intensity of employer involvement has increased over time" (Kopp, Kazis & Churchill, 1995, p.10). Another study of cooperative education sites found that "school staff tended to indicate that employer recruitment was not a significant problem and that there were generally enough employer slots for the referral of eligible students" (Lynn & Wills, 1994, p.23). Other researchers hold positive views on the likelihood of widespread employer involvement (Zemsky, 1994; Kazis and Goldberger, 1995; Wieler and Bailey, 1996).

This paper reports on findings from a three-year research project focused on the question of whether sufficient numbers of employers can be recruited in order to create a national school-to-work system with a substantial work-based learning component. Twelve programs at nine sites, located in both urban and rural areas, were selected as case-study research sites.[2] The research attempted to answer the following questions:

- Can employers be recruited?
- What strategies are used to recruit employers, and which are successful?
- What deters potential employer participants from becoming involved?
- Why do employers initially become involved, and why do they stay involved?
- Why do employers leave the programs, and do many leave once involved?
- Is there a relationship between employers' motivations and the structure and quality of programs?

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[2] Five of these sites were also survey sites; a telephone survey of employers participating in those five programs, as well as a telephone survey of employers from the same regions who were not participating, were also conducted. See Bailey, Hughes, & Barr (1998).

We found that many employers are being successfully recruited; in fact, the recruitment and retention of employer partners was not the primary barrier in the implementation of the programs we studied. Rather, student recruitment, and parent, teacher, and counselor buy-in, were all found to be significant obstacles interrelated with the problem of employer participation. There appear to be trade-offs between employer participation, student demand, and program quality. In addition, employer motivations for participation are rarely pure but are mixed and can change over time. Thus we conclude that employer participation cannot be studied separately from other program features and concerns.

THE STUDY

In order to study employer motivations for participating in school-to-work programs, we sought programs with a strong work-based learning component. Some school-to-work initiatives offer students one-day job-shadowing opportunities, or short-term mentors from the business community, and while these activities are certainly valuable, programs where students spend regular and significant amounts of time at workplaces require the most commitment from employers. As we wanted to determine why the most involved employers had chosen to participate, we looked at programs in which employers take in students as interns or apprentices over the course of one school year or two. During the summer and fall of 1995, we identified and recruited twelve case-study programs. In the fall of 1995 and the winter and spring of 1996, we conducted at least one and in some cases two site visits to each of the programs. Since the site visits, we have regularly followed up with the programs.

At each research site IEE staff toured the programs or schools and interviewed students, teachers, counselors, principals, and intermediaries that help broker the participation of employers. Researchers observed some classes, particularly any that purported to link the work-based learning component with the classroom curriculum. We also visited worksites and interviewed employers, including the human resources staff who often coordinated the student interns, as well as the individuals who supervised and mentored the students. We specifically inquired as to whether the school-to-work programs were developed with employer initiative or input, how the sites have recruited and worked with employers in the past, and what methods program personnel are using to continue to recruit employers. We focused on whether there is attrition among participating employers in the already-established programs, and if so, why. We directly asked employers about their motivations for involvement, and what factors would encourage or discourage their continued participation.

CATEGORIES OF CONSTRAINT

The twelve case-study work-based learning programs include some new as well as some older, more established programs, and they can be divided into three categories according to whether they lack students, employers, or neither. The fact that the main problem of some programs is that they lack students, rather than employers, is significant, as it calls into question the assumption that employer participation is the principal challenge to creating a school-to-work system.

"Student-Constrained"

The "student-constrained" programs, those which have more difficulty recruiting students than they do employer partners, are the following three programs at two different sites:

- the New Visions Medical Careers program in Rochester, New York; a senior-year, full-day program begun in 1993 in which up to forty students alternate between academic health-based classes, and unpaid internships in two different hospital departments;
- the New Visions Graphic Communications program, a printing program also in Rochester and modeled on the health program;
- the Madison-Oneida BOCES[3] Manufacturing Technologies Program, begun in the fall of 1994 in a rural area outside Syracuse, New York, in which ten to twelve seniors were placed in area worksites three mornings per week, and their work experiences were coordinated with applied academic work.

Employer recruitment is not a challenge because students are not enrolling in these programs in significant numbers. In fact, the latter two programs have ceased to operate because of a lack of student enrollment.

"Employer-Constrained"

Once there is steady student demand, some programs do have difficulty securing large numbers of employers to provide work-based learning placements. Interested students may be turned away, or may have to wait for a placement. The "employer-constrained" category includes the following programs:

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[3] Board of Cooperative Education Services.

- the Education for Employment School-to-Careers system in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, which after five years in existence is now placing over 1500 juniors and seniors in paid work-based learning one or two days per week;
- the Greater Lehigh Valley Youth Apprenticeship Program in Pennsylvania, a two-year magnet high school begun in 1994, which enrolled approximately 100 students and placed them into paid apprenticeships but is no longer operating;
- the New York City High School of Economics and Finance, a four-year magnet high school which opened its doors in the fall of 1993, enrolls 450 students, and requires the completion of three internships (two unpaid and one paid);
- the Financial Learning Academy of Genesee (FLAG) of the Genesee Area Skills Center (GASC) in Flint, Michigan, begun in 1995, which places approximately 50 students per year in three worksite classrooms and short-term paid positions at area financial institutions;
- the Manufacturing Technology Partnership (MTP), also of the GASC in Flint and created in 1991 through a partnership with General Motors, which places almost 100 students in paid work-based learning each year.

Having achieved wide acceptance in their respective communities, these programs have plenty of student demand but staff are still working hard to build a sizable base of participating employers.[4] Everyone agrees that employer recruitment requires a concerted effort, but the experiences of many programs is that it is not impossible. Our study confirms not only that it can be done but that other factors may pose more of a problem.

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[4] The Office of Technology Assessment reports that, in the programs they studied, program staff managed to recruit only a median of an additional six employers per year using the equivalent of one-half of a full-time staff person's time (Office of Technology Assessment, 1995).

"Established" - Stable Numbers of Students and Employers

The existence of the established programs demonstrates that over time, student and employer constraints can both be overcome. The established programs are characterized by steady student demand and if not high employer recruitment, then high employer retention. Four of our programs fall into this group:

- LaGuardia Community College in New York City, established in 1971 as the country's first community college with a mandatory cooperative education requirement, enrolls 10,000 students and places 2000 students with over 300 employers every year;
- Careers in Health in Flint, Michigan, a half-day medical occupations program housed at the Flint GASC since 1988, places 250 students per year in hospitals and other healthcare worksites;
- City-As-School in New York City, an alternative New York City high school, enrolls 650 students and awards high school credits for internships with over 350 participating employers;
- Kalamazoo County Education for Employment in Michigan, a school-to-work system founded in 1986, enrolls over 2000 students in twenty-five different career clusters and has over 100 employers who offer work-based learning opportunities.

School-to-work initiatives, then, can be analyzed in terms of these categories of constraint. Recruiting employer partners is not always the foremost, or most difficult, hurdle programs must overcome; some programs initially have more trouble recruiting students than they do employer partners. Without large numbers of student applicants, large numbers of work-based learning opportunities are not needed. Once there is high student demand, however, the younger programs we are studying do have some difficulty

securing enough employers to provide work-based learning placements. Finally, the longevity and relatively large size of the four older programs included in our research illustrate that over time, programs can gain a reputation for benefiting both students and employers, and can become successful at recruiting both.

EMPLOYER MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL-TO-WORK

Bailey's (1995) typology of employer motivations is a useful context in which to place a study of employer participation in work-based learning programs. Bailey identified three types of motivation that may affect employers' decisions to participate in school-to-work programs: philanthropic, individual, and collective. Employers may decide to provide work-based learning placements for philanthropic or altruistic reasons, such as to reach out to the community, or to help youth. Previous studies have found philanthropic motivation to be a commonly-cited reason for employer involvement (Lynn & Wills, 1994; Pauly, Kopp & Haimson,1994).

Employers may decide to become school-to-work partners for individual reasons; participation is seen to bring benefits to the particular firm.[5] One potential benefit is the positive public relations from publicizing their contribution to education. In addition, student interns may be of use to individual firms as short-term, no-cost or low-cost labor; they may act as temporary help. However, the low monetary cost of student interns is often offset by the high supervisory cost of having such interns (Bailey, 1995). Work-based learning programs may also be used by employers as part of their long-term labor recruitment strategy. If student interns can be groomed to become future permanent

[5] Also see Klein (1995) for an evaluation of the economic incentives for employer participation in school-to-work initiatives.

employees, firm recruitment costs may be reduced. Yet this potential benefit to firms may not be realized, either, as interns may elect to forego a permanent position for postsecondary education.

Finally, there are collective reasons for employer participation. Bailey states that "one of the most common arguments for improving education in the United States is that employers lack a skilled workforce" (1995, p. 20). The collective perspective is that while companies might not benefit immediately or directly from their own student interns, the broad implementation of school-to-work would strengthen the labor supply for all. Work-based education should help to develop a more skilled labor force overall, which should be an incentive for firms to participate.

EMPLOYER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Employer involvement in the early initiation and development phases occurred in all but two of our programs. Only City-As-School and LaGuardia Community College were created solely by educators, while in all the other cases employers participated in initial discussions of how the programs would be structured, either through formal means such as educator/employer boards (as in Lehigh and Kalamazoo) or informal means such as personal networking between education administrators and employers (as in Rochester).

Looking at employers' involvement in the creation of work-based learning programs is important because the dialogue that occurs between educators and employers during the formation phase of a program can determine the particular philosophy of the program. For example, in some programs, internships are considered and called "learning

experiences," in others, "jobs." The intent may be for employers to treat student interns as learners and not as paid workers, exposing them to a wide range of activities and teaching them about the workplace, or it may be for employers to use interns as they would regular employees, including expecting them to be productive and paying them. The particular motivations behind the employers' involvement, i.e., do they want to be seen as partners in improving the education system, or do they want to train and hire labor, will help determine the philosophy and stated aims of the program.

Employer recruitment is the other side of employer motivation: in order to successfully recruit employer partners, educators must determine what employers' potential motivations are and speak to those motivations. Again, employers' motivations may have helped determine the goals of the program in the first place, and if this is the case, employer recruitment is simplified; program staff will know whether their pitch to employers should be "help young people" while students primarily observe and assist other workers as an "extra pair of hands," or "train and hire your own labor." While both strategies can be successful at recruiting and retaining employers, they make different assumptions about employers' incentives and demand different resources from them.

"Student-Constrained"

Employer recruitment was never a concern of the three "student-constrained" programs, as they were developed with employer partners and did not need further employers. The major employer partners in each case helped to structure the programs and all three types of employer motivation – philanthropic, individual, and collective – can be seen in these three cases. The employers had different incentives for becoming involved: helping youth, an interest in receiving positive public relations, a need for

labor, promoting their industry. The primary lesson here is that the interest and participation of employers is insufficient for program success.

For example, the New Visions Graphic Communications program, the defunct printing program in Rochester, NY, is a case of the individual and collective needs of employers bringing about the creation of a school-to-work initiative. Area printing and graphics firms were having difficulty finding the right entry-level employees, and were also experiencing high rates of turnover as they recruited employees away from each other. Several companies decided to work together, along with educators, to create an internship program, through which they could channel young people into their industry. A senior-year program was created, modeled on the existing medical careers program, in which students rotated between a classroom where they followed a printing curriculum (more than one employer offered classroom space but the program was housed at the Rochester Institute of Technology) and the worksites. Yet not enough was done to make the program attractive to students and their parents; the program was cancelled after two years because of a lack of student enrollment. It is interesting that the conditions that gave rise to the printers' collective effort, the lack of interest by young people in the printing profession, also caused the program to fold.

There are several reasons for the lack of student demand for these three programs. All three were initially developed through (though not necessarily located at) area vocational-technical centers, so were probably assumed by their constituents to be traditional vocational programs. Yet since they were structured differently from other vocational programs, many teachers, counselors, parents, and students do not know exactly what to make of the new programs. The two New Visions programs were

structured as challenging, full-time, senior-year programs in which students alternate between blocks of integrated course work at an area school, and blocks of work-based learning and related coursework at the worksites hosting the programs. The opinion of the staff, which is supported by students interviewed, is that potential enrollees not only do not want to leave their home high schools and friends for the social-activity-laden senior year, but they also do not want to have to work very hard.

The high-quality medical careers program is still operating yet it is struggling; for now, the administration continues to support the program, and the staff constantly work on ways to create interest in it. Retention of Rochester General Hospital as the employer partner has not been difficult, even though state matching funds that helped to support the program have run out, because New Visions costs them little and provides them benefits. Hospital staff have come to value the student interns as "extra pairs of hands" and in some cases staff morale has increased. At one time both program staff and the hospital vice president hoped that the program could be expanded to other healthcare organizations in the area, but so far the low student enrollment has precluded this. Employer retention in the printing and the manufacturing programs is a moot point as the programs are no longer being offered. In both cases, however, the participating employers were disappointed at the programs' failure and have made it clear that they would make another effort at a partnership.

Employer-Constrained

These programs are still struggling to recruit adequate numbers of employers.[6] For example, the ambitious Philadelphia effort has as its goal to eventually provide a

[6] The Lehigh program no longer exists, but it will be discussed as it was at the time of our visit.

quarter of the district's juniors and seniors with paid work experiences, which would number around 6,000 placements per year. We found students working in both paid and unpaid positions within the district's schools while they were waiting for paid positions in outside sites. For example, one young woman was doing a great deal of productive work without pay in a principal's office. In the Greater Lehigh Valley Youth Apprenticeship program, in which a variety of industries were participating, the director of the program was at the beginning wholly responsible for employer recruitment and placing eighty-some students. Although she seemed to attend a different industry dinner or meeting every evening, it was too big a job for one person, and she was unable to immediately place all the students accepted to the program at worksites. The program eventually hired a full-time staff person to concentrate solely on employer recruitment.

At the New York City High School of Economics and Finance, a new urban magnet high school, students, who must complete three internships before graduation, accept internship placements as they come in to the program staff. The sequence of work-based learning experiences is not completed on any particular schedule, because the staff do not know how many slots for students will be available at any particular time. Enrollment in the Flint FLAG program is limited by the number of employers willing to provide classroom space for the program. The General Motors plant that was the sponsoring business partner of the Manufacturing Technology Program in Flint suddenly scaled back its participation from fifty student interns to only ten. Program staff had to scramble to find sufficient numbers of work-based learning placements at other firms for their students and had to learn not to rely so much on GM.

As students, parents, and educators buy into school-to-work programs and enrollment increases, how do program personnel go about recruiting new employers in order to meet increasing student demand for work placements?

Research

Successful programs have conducted research (by way of surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups) to identify growing industries and specific firms within those industries. Some industries in particular may like the idea of "trying out" a young worker before hiring him or her; program staff must find out which ones these are. Our findings agree with previous research, which has found that this sort of strategy works best with those industries in which postsecondary education is not necessary or in which much of the training and education for the trade takes place on the job, those industries which would normally consider youth just out of high school (Kazis and Goldberger 1995).

Research also involves finding out what kind of program structure or schedule would best suit employers. While the scheduling of work-based learning is often constrained by class and bus schedules (some employers wished they could have student interns for longer periods during the day), we find that some program personnel do take employers' preferences into account when structuring programs, so that the days, times, and number of hours that students will be on the job coincide as much as possible with employers' desires. The Lehigh Valley apprenticeship program was formed according to the preferences of area employers; it was decided that students would work full-time every other week for up to two years, so that students could become productive at the worksites and employers could use two students to "job-share" a full-time position. The Flint FLAG program was also very much structured by the businesses who would

participate; the firms donated classroom space, consulted on the curriculum, and agreed to provide paid short-term projects for student interns as well as speakers who lecture the students on topics such as accounting.

While school-to-work staff put resources into determining the characteristics and needs of their local employers, few employers see it as their role to meet students' needs. They do not see themselves as teachers. While the word "partnership" implies accommodation on the part of all its members, we have more commonly found educators adhering to employers' needs. For example, the philosophy of the staff at the Flint GASC is that the employers, not the students, are their "customers." Program staff have little control over the content of internships. One FLAG teacher said that while she was skeptical of the value of some of the short-term paid projects given to her students, she was reluctant to criticize them for fear of alienating the employers. Lehigh employers we interviewed loved the internship schedule created for them, but students did not benefit from career exploration by remaining in one firm for so long. Several students said they had spent their junior year learning a job and their senior year performing the job.

Strategic Planning

A great deal of strategic thinking and planning is being done with regard to employer recruitment and retention. Program personnel ponder which type of appeal, philanthropic, individual or collective, will serve to convince which types of employers. For example, one school-to-career coordinator in Philadelphia said that it took her some time to learn how to be a "salesman." She said that she eventually discovered that while making a pitch to a prospective employer, ..."you have to take the educator's hat off –

emphasize that part of it too – but you have to let them know what's in it for them, what are the benefits to them."

The Philanthropic Appeal

There are mixed views on the value of the philanthropic appeal. One school-to-careers coordinator from Philadelphia said that a selling point is to tell an employer: "Here are children from your own community that you can actually directly help." She states that employers like to work with a particular school in their own community. Yet coordinators from other programs told us that while participating employers often cite philanthropic reasons (among others) for their involvement, program personnel do not usually emphasize altruism when making their pitches to employers. Some of those whose job it is to recruit employers told us that they feel they can always "throw it in," that employers can "give back to the community" through participation, but that sometimes this pitch can backfire because the implication is that employers do not give to their communities already. Employers may take offense at this.

Still, those who do not overtly use this sort of appeal believe that philanthropic reasons do motivate employers to get involved. One internship coordinator said that she has certain employers to whom she knows she can send the most troubled students; she knows that they will continue in the program however little they receive from their participation. The impression of teachers at New York City's High School of Economics and Finance is that employers become involved because "they feel sorry for inner-city public school kids." In interviews with employers themselves, we did hear such views, but they rarely put forth humanitarian concern as the sole or most important incentive for their involvement.

The Individual Benefits Appeal

1) Public relations. An employer may see the public relations benefits that can result from taking student interns. We were told by the staff of Philadelphia's school-to-work initiative that Philadelphia's hospitals use their participation in the program for public relations purposes. A bandwagon effect has even been created among the city's different hospitals. Thus, initial employer involvement can help program personnel succeed with further recruitment; the program is given legitimacy in the eyes of other employers, and non-participants may be pushed to become involved so they do not look bad in comparison with participants.

2) Labor need: getting extra help now and recruiting screened workers for later. Program personnel tell employers that they can meet their labor needs, whether for short-term cheap help, or for long-term, permanent employees, through a school-to-work program. In a survey of participating employers carried out by the Office of Technology Assessment, nearly two-thirds of employers cited recruitment goals as the most important reason for their participation (Office of Technology Assessment, 1995). Because student interns are either free or are paid a low hourly wage and given no benefits, student labor is less expensive than hiring an adult temporary or permanent worker. Indeed, it appears that some employers use school-to-work programs as temporary agencies; the costs of supervising students evidently do not outweigh the benefits of the students' labor.

The Flint FLAG program is an example of firms benefiting from cheap labor. While the creation of the program was spurred by a local bank's concern about the area's labor pool, the program was structured so that the participating firms can use the students in the program very much like temporary help. When a firm has a project or task that a

student can assist with, the firm contacts a program staff member, who matches a student to the project. Students leave their worksite classrooms for these "earning projects" which can last from one day to several weeks, and students are paid $5.00 per hour for this work. The most exciting example we heard was of a student who had helped a bank put into place a new computer software system. Other "earning projects" are more mundane, such as microfilming and then shredding terminated employee files. Thus firms participating in this program are clearly gaining low-cost, productive labor.

An employer who takes interns from New York City's High School of Economics and Finance was clear about the firm's use of the students as "extra help," and said they probably could not take interns if they had to pay them. When we asked a focus group of students from this school why they thought employers become involved with them, the students said almost simultaneously: "Free labor!" While the student responses weren't all negative, one student in particular had received the impression from her first internship that employers do not take interns in order to give them a learning experience but in order to get their most tedious work accomplished. Thus internships can meet employers' needs, but the lack of structuring and oversight of the work-based learning in some programs makes it difficult to see how students' learning needs are being met.

We found many examples of employers who are using school-to-work programs as a means of recruiting permanent, full-time employees. A railway maintenance yard for Philadelphia's SEPTA public transportation system is successfully using the city's school-to-career system to recruit apprentices; at this worksite student interns follow a demanding curriculum that was created by the assistant director of the yard especially for the program, and are paid $9.60 an hour. The director of the now-defunct Lehigh Valley

Youth Apprenticeship program pitched the benefits of trained labor and the problem of local skills shortages to potential participants. Two of the employers with whom we spoke hoped that they were training a student who would stay on as a permanent, full-time employee.

The Flint Manufacturing Technologies Partnership (MTP) with General Motors came out of that company's need for skilled trades apprentices. Through a workforce attrition prediction program, the manager of one GM plant, after a twenty-year hiring freeze, learned that many of his employees would be retiring soon and that he had no young employees to replace them. GM was also under pressure to hire more minority workers. Through this manufacturing school-to-work program, in partnership with the area education officials and the union, GM can rely on a steady stream of young recruits who are prepared for the apprenticeship examination. The program now has three General Motors plants taking a total of thirty-four students in the Flint area, and has been replicated in other parts of Michigan. However, as noted above, after the first year GM significantly reduced the number of students they were willing to take, and additional employers had to be recruited at the last minute. Program staff worked to sign up other employers and, currently, twenty non-GM employers take student interns because, according to the program director, "Skilled labor is impossible to find in Genesee County."

3) Boosting the morale and enthusiasm of regular employees. Some employers say that having student interns in their firms serves to boost employee morale and enthusiasm. Having to teach their job to an interested young person renews employees' pride in their work. For example, the director of community relations at a Philadelphia hospital hosting

high school interns said that the hospital personnel working with the students were receiving gratification from having young people look up to them. She felt that the presence of the students was a definite benefit to the employees, saying, "Kids keep you young." Thus our findings agree with those of Kazis and Goldberger, who state that "employers report...that having young people in their workplaces motivates existing employees...and improves the quality of supervision and coaching, for the adult work force as well as for the young people" (1995, 188-9).[7]

A program coordinator in Philadelphia nicely summarized the individual incentives: "Most employers are not willing to do this for strictly humanitarian reasons, of course. They want to know that there is some kind of benefit at the end... And basically what they see this as is a way to get future employees and get a pool of qualified people and a way to teach management skills to their own employees by being a mentor."

The Collective Appeal

One type of collective motivation is the goal of marketing an industry as a whole to young people. The owner of a Lehigh Valley electrical wiring company who participated in the apprenticeship program characterized his participation as a "selling job" that needed to be done. He pointed out that the work done by his employees is dirty and is not viewed by young people as being glamorous, thus he appreciated having the opportunity to teach a wide audience, educators as well as students, about the more modern and technical aspects of his industry. The printing employers in Rochester were also attempting to do a "selling job" of their industry.

Other employers are concerned about the quality of their area's entry-level labor force. The Flint FLAG program was created through the efforts of local banks and

[7] Also see Klein (1995).

financial services companies out of a concern that their applicants and employees lacked a "customer-service orientation." Their goal was to try to upgrade the skills of the area labor force as a whole, which could ultimately benefit all the local employers. They were also concerned about the tendency of Flint youth to leave the area, and felt that if students could make personal connections with local employers, perhaps they would remain.

Thus, we did find examples of collective motivations, but overall they were not as common as individual incentives. More importantly, in all of these cases the employers were also hoping to benefit individually through their participation.

"Established": An Incremental and Flexible Approach to Employer Recruitment and Retention

The following four programs, which we call "established" because of their success with both student enrollment and employer recruitment, are very different from each other regarding occupational focus, structure, and philosophy. We find that their long-term success with employer recruitment and retention can be attributed to the kind of local research and strategizing that the newer programs are engaged in. This points out that the wider discussion of employer participation has perhaps been too abstract so far, because the conditions for employer-educator partnerships are locally determined. The following is an analysis of the four established initiatives, focusing on how they have been able to grow and to endure.

Flint Careers in Health (CIH)

Careers in Health, an award-winning half-day medical occupations program, was started in a health magnet public school in an inner-city area in 1982. The program, begun as a pilot with eleven students, offered unpaid internships at Hurley Hospital, a

teaching hospital that was accustomed to having students on-site, even high school students. In 1988, the administration of the program was moved to the area vocational-technical center (GASC) in order to broaden student access. The approximately 250 students now enrolled each year constitute a mixed population from 32 different high schools. Most are juniors, but students have the option of returning to the program for their senior year. Hurley Hospital now takes approximately 100 students per year; a second hospital has 80, and a third has 40. Students receive some basic medical training at the GASC before starting three-week rotations through seven different areas at the worksites for two hours every day. Placements have also been found in medical offices and in health maintenance organizations for students who are interested in the non-clinical health field.

According to the program creator and coordinator, it has not been difficult to get other healthcare facilities to participate. A teacher agreed that they can acquire placements for students fairly easily; at the time of our visit they had just added a placement in a physical therapy office. Area hospitals and medical offices are competitive for business, so they do not want any one hospital receiving recognition and credit for hosting an educational internship program. One hospital, which was initially reluctant to become involved in the program, came on board when program staff told the CEO that a new brochure was going to highlight the program's employer partners: the competitors of this particular hospital. The vice president of human resources at this hospital, who was at first against participating because of his negative stereotypes of Flint high school students, now speaks proudly of "impressive kids."

In addition, we were told that the healthcare industry as a whole needs qualified people. As with the FLAG employers, the area hospital administrators want to try to keep educated youth in Flint, and they want to help youth become interested in the healthcare field. One hospital human resources vice president said that while he has tried in the past to recruit nursing students and others from universities around the state, it is difficult to induce young people with talent to come to Flint. Thus he views the program as an opportunity to develop the skilled workers they need from the inside. Program graduates, some of whom will simultaneously pursue further education, are given "first crack" at the hundred or so entry-level positions open every year such as orderlies, food service workers, and housekeeping aides. If the graduates leave the area to attend college, the program developers hope that they will return to Flint, especially as their having the local program experience on their resumes will open doors for them.

Although the philosophy of the program is that students are exposed to the healthcare profession and learn through observation and limited hands-on work, the employers have found that the students do contribute by accomplishing some real work. While some hospital staff initially believed the students would be more trouble than they would be worth, over time it has come to be seen as a perk and not as an obligation for a department to have an intern. The interns are not paid and the GASC performs all program administration (all that is asked of the students' supervisors is that they evaluate the students at the end of the internship), so the costs to the employers of participation are minimal. At the HMO, the unpaid students substitute for paid temporary workers in some cases, so there is actually a cost savings to the firm. Genesys Hospital, which has now been participating in the program for four years, started with forty students and has

doubled that number over time, because the individual departments reported good experiences with the interns.

Thus all of the employer motivations discussed above can be applied: philanthropic, individual, and collective. Hospitals do want to contribute to the welfare of the community, especially if they can benefit public-relations-wise for doing so. All of these facilities continue their participation as they find that they can benefit from the students' labor. Finally, these employers are concerned about the quality of their current and future workforce and hope that locally trained youth will stay in the area. Local conditions in Flint are such that the health industry wants to attract and keep talented youth, and healthcare institutions compete for customers and for employees. Program coordinators know these things and use them to their advantage.

Flint Careers in Health is just one example of a successful school-to-work program in the healthcare field. For several reasons, educators are finding that hospitals are particularly suited to participation in work-based learning programs. Hospital positions encompass a wide variety of tasks that range in skill level, meaning that meaningful and interesting work can be found for all levels of students. The existence of such a wide range of skill areas also means that students can learn about many different jobs in one location. In addition, hospitals are traditionally places of teaching and learning, as well as of volunteerism. Hospitals often have a staff person or office that coordinates volunteers; school-to-work programs can often easily be folded into these structures.

City-As-School

City-As-School (CAS) is an alternative New York City High School, grades 10-12, that opened its doors in 1972. The Manhattan branch (there are sites in other New York City boroughs) that we studied enrolls approximately 650 students. This unique school for at-risk students awards high school credits for internships and the completion of a specified set of activities related to each internship. In-school classes are offered, but most students spend more time on the job than in the classroom; before graduating, most students will have had eight to twelve different internships around the city. The school maintains a databank of over 350 employers who offer work-based learning experiences.

To ensure that students are learning, and not simply working, CAS demands a great deal of its employers. Because the students earn many, if not most, of their high school credits through work-based learning, the internships are not "jobs" but are called "learning experiences" (LE's). Since students are not technically "employed" (they are not paid), the employers are called "resources." For each LE, students complete and submit a packet of activities, written and oral, that are created for the specific LE, often with the assistance of the employer (this is called a Learning Experience Activities Packet, or LEAP). For example, a student can receive a science credit by interning in a science museum and completing a packet of applied science exercises.[8] The school internship coordinators are called resource coordinators (RC's); there are 14 RC's, each with the responsibility of placing and supervising thirty or more students each internship cycle. Most visit their assigned students at least once during the eight-week internship period.

In spite of the commitment required of participating employers, CAS has successfully retained a large number of employers over the years. According to school staff, in earlier years there was much more solicitation of employers. Resource coordinators used, and still use, word of mouth and the telephone book to make cold calls. They try to convince students' parents to involve their companies or the companies of friends. These methods appear to have worked, because the school now receives many incoming calls from interested employers. School staff asserted that the vast majority of employer turnover is due to firm relocations. Some employers have left the program because of negative experiences, such as student absenteeism or students taking advantage of the situation (such as receiving too many personal calls throughout the day). Still, the RC's no longer have to spend an inordinate amount of time recruiting new resources; they spend more time retaining the ones they already have and supervising students.

One key to the success of CAS lies in a thorough screening of potential employer partners to identify those willing to make a contribution to local youth, and establishing close and protective relationships with them. One resource coordinator told us that she makes sure employers are willing to make a contribution to the welfare of the young people. She tries to ensure in advance that the workplace staff will work well with the teenagers and that they will be prepared for and able to deal with some of the problems these particular at-risk students have. Thus the RC's do not have a "hands-off" policy when it comes to the resources. They spend time with newly-involved employers to

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[8] As another example, one student interning at an African dance center learned a particular dance, researched its country of origin and its meaning, and made a presentation to her resource coordinator. She also kept a daily journal of her tasks at the internship, and conducted a taped interview of a staff member.

articulate how the student will fit into the organization and what type of tasks the student can perform. They take care in placing students with employers so that there will be a good "match." Once students begin their internships, the RC's frequently contact the employers to check on students' attendance and progress. Participating employers with whom we spoke were pleased with the ease of access they have to the RC's.

This urban school's success in placing large numbers of student interns rests not only on urban employers' feelings of altruism towards inner-city youth, but also on its service in providing free help. One employer with whom we spoke, who has been taking student interns from CAS for about ten years, said she was directed by one of her employees to CAS when she mentioned that she needed some extra help in the firm. Another employer with whom we spoke, the Director of Development at a non-profit cultural center, also said she was motivated to participate by her need for office help; her staff has recently been cut almost in half. Yet she also told us proudly of several instances where her interns had turned their lives around for the better as a result of their experience. Thus while employers participate to benefit from short-term free labor, they are also motivated by their desire to help New York City youth. An RC asserted many of CAS's resources must have great levels of altruism, because "they wouldn't be doing it, with all the problems the kids have." The supervisor of student interns at a hair products testing salon said that "The fact that we're able to get our hands on the pulse of some of these kids, before it turns to something negative, is a real thrill."

At CAS we found evidence that the longer employers participate in a work-based learning program, the more benefits they reap from having student interns. At the hair products testing salon, the student interns are supervised by the Director's assistant. Over

the course of years with the program, she has created handouts that explain the students' duties and describe the operations of the facility. On interns' first day, they are given the handouts, can ask any questions, and then are given a tour of the worksite. Thus while the organization of the students' work and the creation of the written information required an initial investment of time on the part of the students' supervisor, time is saved in the long run by getting the interns off to a more efficient start. Businesses can get more value from interns once they have participated in the program for awhile and have experience in organizing the duties, and learning, of interns.

CAS, then, proves those wrong who say that school-to-work programs will necessarily fail if they ask too much of their employer partners. CAS has become established by finding employers willing to try to help troubled New York City youth in exchange for free help, and by using a personal, hands-on approach to the school-intern-employer relationship. Given the school's at-risk student population, its success in placing hundreds of interns each year and graduating them is evidence that school-to-work is for all students.

Kalamazoo County Education for Employment

Education for Employment in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is a school-to-work system founded on a strong relationship between educational institutions and the business community. Begun in 1986, at the time of our visit the system offered programs in twenty-five different career clusters,[9] and over 2000 students in grades 8 through 12 were

[9] These are: agri science, auto body, auto technology, business services technology, construction trades, child care, commercial design, cosmetology, drafting and design, electro-mechanical technology, graphics communications, health occupations, heating and air conditioning, hospitality, law enforcement, machine tool, manufacturing cluster, marketing education, office occupations, paper technology, photography, radio broadcasting, T.E.A.M. plastics, theater technology, and welding.

enrolled. During their senior year, students take part in co-op education, externships, or apprenticeships. Over one hundred employers offer work-based learning, and scores of other employers are involved through business advisory committees.

The history and development of the Kalamazoo County EFE program is a study in cooperation between education and business. Kalamazoo County's seven small rural school districts created a consortium through which to supply vocational education in 1982; this was expanded in 1986 with the support of the Chamber of Commerce to include two other school districts, the intermediate schools, and Kalamazoo Valley Community College. The philosophy guiding the consortium is that *all* students need career/technical programs,[10] which should be delivered through a partnership with business. Students are the customers of the system, not employers. For each of the system's career areas there is an advisory committee consisting of representatives from business, labor, and education. The advisory committees are knowledgeable in their fields, and meet at least twice during each school year to jointly review and plan curriculum. Committee members also assist in public relations, fundraising, and finding other business partners who will offer mentorships and internships to participating students. Other committees include the Workforce Entry Advisory Committee, which oversees the work-based learning experiences offered to students, and the EFE Career Education Planning District Council, which advises the course of the overall EFE system.

We studied two of EFE's career fields in depth: health occupations and hospitality. Both are "off-site occupational programs," meaning that businesses provide classroom space for the programs. Approximately 80 students participate each school

[10] The assistant superintendent who runs the program says that he now avoids using the word "vocational" because it has a negative connotation and is viewed as a strategy for only some students.

year in the health occupations program, which began in 1989. At that time it was recognized that labor shortages were expected to occur in the health field by the year 2000, so the Kalamazoo County Consortium, Bronson Health Care Group, and Borgess Medical Center agreed to create a health occupations program to introduce the field as a learning and work opportunity for the area's young people. During the first year of the two-year program, students take academic health-related courses at Bronson Hospital, learn core generic skills, and shadow health care professionals; during the second year, students take additional classes and complete a 350-hour internship. Teachers have defined specific competencies that are to be met through the work experience.

During the school year 1995-6, 41 students were enrolled in the hospitality program,[11] which is housed in a Radisson Hotel. In 1990, an EFE program director called local business persons, including the owner of the property where the Radisson is located, to see if there was interest in establishing a Hospitality Careers program; there was, and the program opened in 1991. The business partner with whom we spoke said, "We were in the right place at the right time. We have always been community-minded as good corporate citizens." This program is not yet running at capacity, which may have more to do with student interest and available classroom space than employer participation, because the program instructor said they do not have difficulty recruiting employers to provide the unpaid internships. They use a novel recruitment method: students request interviews with three hospitality employers they have identified in the area, saying they are doing a research project. After the interviews, the students decide where they would like to intern. The program instructor then approaches the employer, saying the student

[11] The hospitality program includes three subfields: the lodging industry, food service, and travel and tourism.

has expressed an interest in an internship, and asks if they would be willing to cooperate. The instructor said she has been mostly successful with this strategy.

Kalamazoo's success in offering career education to thousands of students and work-based learning to hundreds is likely due to a systemic approach to education reform and a wide variety of employer recruitment efforts. The staff's approach to serving all students and "going to scale" has been an incremental one; the number and type of career clusters offered has increased and changed over time (in just the last few years, the number has increased from fourteen to the current twenty-five). While there has been an incremental approach regarding occupational offerings, the level and extent of school involvement has not proceeded incrementally, because the establishment of the consortium has meant that all education players have been on board from the beginning. In addition, as opposed to wholly assigning employer recruitment to a handful of teachers or program coordinators, program personnel use their already-committed business contacts (who serve on committees) as well as the enrolled students to attain work-based learning placements. When employers are involved with programs from their inception, the programs have more legitimacy in the eyes of other employers.

LaGuardia Community College

LaGuardia Community College was established in 1971 as the country's first community college with a mandatory cooperative education requirement; it enrolled 500 students that year. Today, it is nationally recognized as a leader in cooperative education and is one of the largest co-op programs in the United States. Student enrollment has grown to approximately 10,000, and every year 2000 students are placed with over 300 employers. Individual internships often relate to the student's course of study, and

students attend seminars in which they study issues such as workplace culture and career-building skills.

If City-As-School and Kalamazoo represent one end of the continuum regarding the involvement asked of their employer partners, LaGuardia represents the other end. The philosophy of the LaGuardia co-op program is that the internship experience should be as close as possible to a real job experience. Students interview for positions, and once hired they are to be treated as if they are regular employees. Students are supposed to contribute to the needs of employers, and it is through the school-based co-op seminars that they are to find added educational value in the tasks they perform on the job. This translates into a "hands-off" attitude towards the employers on the part of program staff; staff communicate by telephone with student interns' supervisors but may not always make site visits.

In spite of the new attention being placed on work-based learning programs and their value, the LaGuardia co-op program has been suffering as of late. The cooperative education requirement of all students was recently decreased from 9 credits to 6, meaning that students have to complete only two internships now, as opposed to three. Paid internships are more difficult to find, and increasing numbers of students are performing unpaid internships at the college itself.[12] In the past the faculty could rely on a core of large employers willing to provide many internships quarter after quarter, but this is no longer true. Placements are not harder to come by, they are just more variable; for example, an employer may take several students one quarter, and none the next. The work of employer recruitment and student placement has thus become more difficult, as

[12] During the 1995-6 school year, 246 out of 1,936 internships (or 13%) were performed at LaGuardia.

the faculty has to continually adjust to employers' needs for flexibility. In addition, there is greater competition in the area for both paid and unpaid internship slots.

The strategy the co-op faculty has tended to use to recruit new employers is the cost-benefit approach. Bringing up the idea of "contributing to the community" and "social responsibility" is seen as an insult, an implication that the employer contributes nothing already. Instead, faculty point out that LaGuardia will screen the students, employers won't have to pay benefits, and no long-term commitment to an individual student is required. However, one faculty member said that even this is a tougher sell than before, because employers can hire people off the street with no benefits for short periods of time. Thus, they argue that their students are a better bet than temps, because they are more motivated. In addition, economic downturns have an effect, as employers do not wish to take interns during such time periods because their regular employees will resent them. They also might not have adequate staff to supervise the interns. However, the program can also benefit from economic downturns, when employers' need for temporary workers increases.

In spite of these difficulties, the continuing existence of LaGuardia's cooperative education program demonstrates that it is possible to maintain for decades an internship program involving thousands of placements and hundreds of employers. Program coordinators follow and address employers' changing motivations for participation. At the same time, students are taught to be prepared for the transitory nature of the labor market, which further contributes to the emphasis on a "real world" experience. The experience of LaGuardia teaches us how a program can adjust over time to changes in economic and other conditions and continue to thrive.

Summary

This analysis of employer participation in four very different long-running work-based learning programs demonstrates that the initiatives have succeeded because of staff's understanding of local economic conditions and their skill at adjusting their strategies accordingly when those conditions change, as well as their ability to form relationships with area employers. These educators have wisely gauged the amount and depth of involvement they can expect from employers and the type and level of returns the employers require in order to continue their participation.

Our observations also reveal several areas for further study. If programs are to succeed and endure, the retention of employers is crucial, because recruiting new partners is difficult and time-consuming. City-As-School retains employers through personal relationships and support, while LaGuardia Community College keeps employers participating by not asking much of them. These different strategies reflect the different purposes of the internships and different incentives of the employers for their involvement. Further research should address the need to motivate employers to maintain their involvement and the related need to demonstrate and communicate increasing gains to employers over time.

Going to Scale

This paper has described school-to-work programs in three different phases. Those in the middle phase, the "employer constrained" programs, have achieved a steady stream of student applications and are in constant search of sufficient work-based learning placements. Employer recruitment is difficult and time-consuming work until a solid base of employer partners is created upon which program staff can rely for work-

based learning placements, and the "established" phase is reached. To address the important question of whether or not the school-to-work reform can "go to scale," we must look at what "going to scale" means for the "employer constrained" programs in our sample.

The Flint Manufacturing Technologies Program, as well as the Financial Learning Academy of Genesee, are designed to be small-to-medium-sized "theme" alternatives in a larger school-to-work system. While both of these programs have grown since their inception, they are still relatively small, with MTP able to take around ninety students and FLAG able to enroll fifty. The Flint area, then, is following a Kalamazoo model, in which "going to scale" means incrementally adding programs in additional local-based occupational areas. Philadelphia is also following this model, with its growth over the past few years to its current six occupational areas (manufacturing, business, health, hospitality and tourism, printing, and transportation).

The High School of Economics and Finance is a magnet school, as was the now-defunct Lehigh initiative, meaning that the school-to-work curriculum offered is only one of several educational alternatives from which students can choose. The High School of Economics and Finance is already operating at capacity, with approximately 450 students. Offering work-based learning to all high school students in the area, then, would mean creating additional magnet schools modeled on school-to-work and/or reforming the schools that already exist. If this were to happen, program coordinators from each school would begin competing with each other for employer partners, so there would be a need to centralize employer recruitment efforts.

Staffing is an important consideration in program growth and stability. Established programs such as City-as-School and LaGuardia Community College have at least a dozen individuals each who coordinate employer participation and student placement. The Flint programs each have what are called "glue people," staff who are responsible for getting out into the community to make connections with employers, and then act as "glue" between the employers and the school.

Many of the programs are "creaming" when it comes to placing students in work-based learning: in order to avoid alienating employer partners, program staff send only their best students to worksites. In Philadelphia, students compete with one another for the available internship slots. A teacher at the High School of Economics and Finance told us that he believes an internship should be a privilege, and not a right; good students should be rewarded with internship opportunities. The problem with this attitude is that those students who may most need the benefits of work-based learning, such as increased motivation for academic achievement, interaction with adults, new social experiences, and the acquisition of skills, may never have access to them.

It is also likely that there has been a "creaming" of employers, meaning that the employer partners initially recruited are those whose participation was won most easily. In that case, the forecast for going to scale is gloomy, because if those who have already been recruited are necessarily those most likely to participate, further recruitment might be very difficult indeed, considering the extent of the resources spent in order to achieve the current level of employer involvement. Alternatively, it is possible that if school-to-work becomes more "mainstream," better-understood and more well-known, it will be

easier for program staff to find employer partners. Yet this scenario also has a gloomy side: as the number and size of programs and systems grow, coordinators might find themselves in a contest for work-based learning slots. Further research should address the possibility that as work-based learning programs multiply, there will be more competition for student placements, and programs may "poach" placements from other programs.[13] Still, if school-to-work is to go to scale, more and stronger attempts must be made at marketing. A public education campaign is needed if school-to-work is not to become one more fad or attempt at reform that failed.

CONCLUSION

To return to the research questions posed at the beginning of this report:

- Can employers be recruited?

We have found moderate to great success with regard to employer recruitment and retention. Of the programs we studied, some have had more difficulty recruiting students than employers, and those that have failed have not done so because of inadequate employer participation. The lesson here is that program staff cannot assume their job is done when they have employers on board. However, employer recruitment is simplified if programs are co-created by employers so that their motivations are understood by educators at the outset. Employer partners can also be used to recruit further business people.

- What strategies are used to recruit employers, and which are successful?

[13] There is also currently some concern that competition for paid internships will be increasing because of the White House's call for employers to hire ex-welfare recipients. It is possible that firms will begin to feel overwhelmed by such requests.

Program staff find out if potential employer partners are in need of public relations, short-term cheap labor, or long-term labor recruitment, and then tailor their pitch accordingly. These "pitches" are made one-on-one or to groups at business and industry functions. Some personnel (as at Kalamazoo) also involve students in the process by having them identify workplaces where they would like to intern; others (as at City-As-School) contact students' parents to try to recruit their firms. From the four long-running programs described above, we learn that these sorts of time-consuming recruitment efforts can pay off after some time. The established programs have a base of employers on which they can rely year after year, so that recruitment efforts can eventually level off.

- What deters potential employer participants from becoming involved?

We looked particularly at the question of pay to see whether having to pay students deters employers. Our case-study programs include both paid and unpaid work-based learning experiences, and programs have been successful with recruitment in both cases. For example, the philosophy in Philadelphia is that the students should feel the work-based learning experience is a real job and so should get a real paycheck, and Philadelphia employers told us that since the amount of money involved is not significant, having to pay the interns is not an obstacle. However, we did come across cases in this program where having to pay the interns limited the number a particular employer could take. At City-As-School, employers do not pay the students, and some employers we interviewed said that they could not take interns if they had to pay them. It is also informative that our four established programs offer mostly unpaid work experiences; City-As-School and Careers in Health are entirely unpaid programs, while

Kalamazoo and LaGuardia have both paid and unpaid internships, yet LaGuardia has been forced to accept more unpaid placements over time. Thus our findings on the question of pay are somewhat mixed, but it seems clear that on the question of simple quantity, having to pay student interns can act as a deterrent.

- Why do employers initially become involved and why do they stay involved?

We find individual incentives to be most salient, followed by philanthropic, and lastly, collective ones. While altruistic sentiments on the part of employers are often present, we believe that philanthropy is rarely the sole or most important reason employers become involved in these educational programs. Rather, employers for the most part must also receive some benefit for their participation to be worthwhile. Similarly, while collective motivations were found in a few instances, the employers in these cases were also hoping to gain individually from their efforts. The specific benefits in which employers are interested depend on their particular local circumstances and their industry, but include positive public relations, free or low-cost short-term labor, and long-term labor recruitment, including minority recruitment.

- Why do employers leave the programs, and, once involved, do many leave?

Staff from our case-study programs contended that employers were most likely to leave because of reasons other than dissatisfaction with the program (such as the firm closing or moving). We were unable to compile information on the numbers of employers who have participated in, and then left, our programs. Further research is needed on this question; for example, a survey of employers who have left school-to-work programs would be useful.

- Is there a relationship between employers' motivations and the structure and quality of programs?

The STWOA called for partnerships of educators and employers to be formed to create and operate school-to-work systems. While we support the idea of these two groups working together, we find that the particular motivations employers have for becoming involved in these programs can disproportionately affect the aims of the programs and the ways in which they are structured. Particularly as individual motivations on the part of employers were found to be most salient, there is some cause for concern that work-based learning initiatives are being created to fulfill employers', not students' needs. The quality (or lack of quality) of work-based learning will be addressed below.

A New Definition Of The Problem

Beyond the specific findings regarding employer participation presented above, we find that a strong theme emerged from our research that the salient problem is not recruiting enough employers to participate, but rather getting all the various constituencies to buy into creating an integrated, quality school-to-work system. Thus employer participation cannot be studied or addressed in isolation from the questions of program structure, student demand, parental acceptance, and the like. Most important, whether or not school-to-work can become universal and endure will depend on whether it is perceived as being of quality, meaning that it improves learning. Research in this field should therefore turn to the following issues:

School-to-Work Acceptance and Student Demand

We find that too strong a focus on employers and their participation can lead to neglect of the other components of the school-to-work model, and of the other constituencies whose support are needed. Many program staff say that there is still a lack of knowledge of what school-to-work is, among educators as well as among the general population. While we find this to be the case, program staff themselves compound the problem by using different terms, such as school-to-careers instead of school-to-work. The new programs in Rochester are called "New Visions" programs. And as mentioned above, some of the new initiatives are based at regional vocational-technical centers, and so are assumed to be traditional vocational programs. Lehigh Valley avoided this awareness gap by naming its initiative a youth apprenticeship program, which resulted in a steady stream of applicants.

Certain groups were singled out as being "bad guys" in terms of blocking school-to-work progress. Secondary school counselors were named in many areas as being particularly resistant to new initiatives. Counselors are often responsible for advising students on their program and course selections. We repeatedly heard school counselors blamed for either not presenting school-to-work programs as options to students or for advising interested students *not* to enroll in them.

For example, we were told that the Flint sending-school guidance counselors tend to protect the programs and teachers in their own schools and so tend to "cream" students for their own programs. The director of the Lehigh apprenticeship program said that the sending-school guidance counselors believe every student belongs in one of the following categories: special education, vocational education, or college prep; school-to-work

"doesn't fit into their world." She said that the counselors are still involved in "sabotage": she has been told by parents that guidance counselors have recommended to them that their children not apply to the apprenticeship program. In a focus group, students said that their guidance counselors either knew nothing about the youth apprenticeship program or had discouraged them from applying to it. The coordinator of the Rochester New Visions medical careers program, when trying to market the program to various high school counselors, was told by one that there was not a single student at that particular high school who was interested in the health occupations.

Teachers are also perceived to be barriers to reform, particularly those who have spent their careers solely in the classroom. The principal of the Genesee Area Skills Center, during his restructuring of this Flint-area vocational-technical center, made it clear that those teachers and staff who did not like the new direction should go elsewhere. Some did leave, and professionals from the business world were brought in. The director of the Lehigh program sought and hired teachers who had pursued previous careers in other fields. The school-to-careers system in Philadelphia is still facing teacher resistance; we were told that it is difficult to get teachers interested in changing the way they teach and in linking what they teach to work-based applications. Program staff said that teachers still think that students are missing the "real work" of the classroom when they leave the school to go to a workplace.

Thus, programs can fail when not enough of an effort is made to win acceptance by teachers, counselors, students, and parents. Indeed, the lack of student (and parent) demand may be a larger problem for school-to-work programs than the recruiting and

retaining of significant numbers of employers. This is an important finding, and one that should inform future research in this area.

The Lack of Integration Between Work-based and School-based Learning

Integration between academics and work-based learning, which is one of the very purposes of the school-to-work reform, is not occurring.[14] In the majority of the programs we studied, work-based learning is simply tacked on to some part of the student's day or week while the rest remains unchanged. If curriculum has been newly created, the classroom and the work-based portions still in most cases exist entirely separately from each other. For example, teachers were given a great deal of autonomy to create curriculum to support the workplace learning activities in the Lehigh Youth Apprenticeship Program and the High School of Economics and Finance, both new magnet schools. However, while the coursework at both schools includes general references to work and careers, students' actual experiences at their workplaces are rarely discussed in the classroom.

Thus we see a neglect of the academic side of school-to-work, as well as few efforts to create the connecting activities called for in the school-to-work legislation. This is disturbing, particularly as researchers in education are coming to believe that the school-to-work approach may teach academic skills even better than traditional approaches. Bailey and Merritt (1997) have argued that the school-to-work strategy is complementary to the "authentic teaching" or "learner-centered" approaches that are advocated by many innovative academic teachers. This goes to the question of the

[14] An early report from the national evaluation of school-to-work finds that nationwide, few students are involved in programs with an integrated academic and vocational curriculum (Hershey et al, 1997).

acceptance of school-to-work: if it is not seen as an academically rigorous strategy, parents and teachers will not support it, and it will fail.

Work-based Learning and Attention to Quality

While it is presumed that work-based education is good for students, what and how students are meant to learn in the workplace is often not addressed specifically either in the design or the operation of the programs. Only some programs require learning/training plans to be agreed upon by all the parties involved; even fewer programs tailor these plans for each individual student. Thus some program personnel are neglecting the specifics of work-based learning on the assumption that something will occur in the workplace that will be of value to the student intern. In additional fieldwork, we are finding that this may not always be the case.[15] More research is needed on what is actually occurring in the workplace; we need to understand if, what and how students are learning there. It is also not yet clear whether work-based learning enhances classroom learning or whether the two are separate yet complementary strategies.

It is clear that more quality control is needed. While, ideally, program staff should visit workplaces, some programs do not have the resources to conduct regular, time-consuming site visits. Yet this is the kind of intervention that can make an enormous difference in a student's learning. Unfortunately, most employers and program staff communicate primarily by telephone. A simple method of quality control is practiced by almost all of the initiatives we studied: daily journals are kept by students in which they record their work-based learning activities and their reflections on those

[15] This refers to a related project called "Pedagogy and Work-based Learning," which we are still conducting.

activities. Program personnel can monitor the work experiences by reading the journals regularly. In this way, problems can be readily identified and remedied.

It is of real concern if programs cater too much to employers' needs in order to secure their participation. At some sites staff answered questions we asked about their program with the response, "because the employers want it that way." The quality of work-based learning and the career exploration function of school-to-work should not be sacrificed to supply the employers with productive workers. These issues require more research as to whether the goal of school-to-work, improved learning for students, is sometimes traded for intensive employer involvement: this is the potential problem of trading quality of work placements for quantity. It is certainly not desirable that program personnel sacrifice student outcomes for employer involvement.

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